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nal would obviously be the most effectual, as we believe the majority of Roman Catholics believe it actually to be the only effectual preservative against "falling away from the truth," and, therefore, could be such a means of preserving truth as St. Paul could not have been silent about when warning the Ephesians against the perils he described, and which Dr. Murray calls the "danger of falling away from the truth, and losing the grace of faith."

We don't accuse Dr. Murray here of intentionally resorting to ambiguity of language (an expedient too commonly and sometimes successfully resorted to by controversialists), but we think he has here unintentionally fallen into it. What are we to understand by the words "the grace of faith" in the passage we have just quoted? Does he mean a personal grace existing in an individual? It is, indeed, true that this grace, the personal Christian grace of faith, is to be preserved by prayer and watchfulness. But what has this to do with the present question? The Apostle was not speaking of "faith" as a grace or state of mind, but of "faith" in the objective sense, as the truth to be believed, and if Dr. Murray uses the word "faith" as it is a grace or state of mind, his argument is irrelevant—but if he uses it as meaning the "whole" body of "Christian doctrine," the "whole counsel of God" of which St. Paul was speaking, and which he so emphatically had just stated "that he had not spared to declare it to them," then Dr. Murray is reduced to assert that an infallible tribunal is of no value whatever in preserving "the whole body of Christian doctrine" or else to admit that St. Paul either was ignorant of it, or designedly but unaccountably omitted to mention the most complete safeguard and preservative against error, a divinely commissioned infallible Church, which if any such existed would be, as Archbishop Whately argues, "to suppose St. Paul destitute not only of all faithfulness in his high office, but of common prudence and rationality."

But Dr. Murray attempts to get out of the difficulty by making an assertion of which he seems to us to have given no semblance of proof. He says (p. 34) the danger was from undisguised heretics and schismatics, endeavouring to corrupt their faith ("speaking perverse things"), and to break the unity of the church ("to draw disciples after them").

This, surely, is a grave error in Dr. Murray's reasoning. What ground has he for limiting the danger to that from undisguised heretics? Was not that from disguised heretics far greater? Can Dr. Murray really think the "ravening wolves" here spoken of by St. Paul to be different from the "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ and ministers of righteousness," whom he speaks of in 2 Cor. x. 13—even as "Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light"—or different from those "wolves in sheep's clothing" against whom our Lord warns his hearers. Were these, too, undisguised heretics? In what age of the world, we would ask, did undisguised heretics appear, and who were they, and how was it that they succeeded? Was it of undisguised heretics and schismatics St. Paul was speaking when he exhorted the same Ephesians (4 ch., v. 14) in these words—"That we be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive?" Can we possibly suppose any false teacher undisguisedly avowing himself to be a heretic, and openly speaking "perverse things," and trying thereby to induce men to become his disciples? Was it from teachers who should come in the open way, as "undisguised heretics," that St. Paul apprehended so great danger, as to have warned the Ephesians night and day with tears to watch and take heed unto themselves? Was it not obviously against disguised and unsuspected heretics that they were not only to combat but to watch? Has not the principal danger in all ages been from these? and was it not in order to detect and unmask those disguised and deceitful false teachers of perverse things, who were "to arise among themselves," that St. Paul was warning them so earnestly—men who would glose over and misinterpret Holy Scripture and apostolical teaching, and attribute to the Apostles what they never said or wrote as part of their Divine teaching, and against whose subtle craftiness it would ever require the greatest watchfulness to guard themselves? It was not merely against ravening wolves from without, but against wolves in sheep's clothing within that the Ephesians were to guard; and what means could be so proper to detect those disguised heretics as that same infallible tribunal, whose function it is, according to Dr. Murray himself, to "proscribe" erroneous doctrine, and expose and punish heresy? And yet St. Paul is wholly silent concerning it.

Dr. Murray represents the Apostle as anxiously warning the elders against palpable and open dangers, which any one could see, and saying nothing of those subtle ones which are always the most dangerous. He represents this skilful and honest pilot of the church as warning the crew, whom he was forced to leave in the hour of peril, to take care of the cliffs and promontories which they could plainly see with their own eyes, and yet saying nothing of the sunken rocks and hidden

shoals which lay in their course, and which might easily escape their notice. Is this natural or credible?

And when Dr. M. specifies in particular the denial of Christ's divinity as one of the errors which fallible pastors are quite competent to deal with effectually, is it not odd he should not have remembered that this was the very point which the first General Council was assembled to decide upon?

But Dr. Murray, after basing his whole argument on the assumption that the ancients of the Churches of Miletus and Ephesus (who had enjoyed the benefit of St. Paul's personal teaching, and learned the whole counsel of God, each one of them, from him as an infallible Apostle) were the persons exclusively addressed by St. Paul on this remarkable occasion (a position which, we think, we have already disproved), was too acute not to perceive that this was not a point likely to be conceded without proof, and he therefore thinks it prudent to show that he had not altogether overlooked it; and alludes to it, in p. 40, as if it were a matter, however, of trifling moment, and easily disposed of. See the paragraph marked with brackets in p. 101.

Here we join issue with Dr. Murray, and beg to dissent from what he calls "the fact just established" as a fact not established at all; for though we agree with him that "the warnings and instructions of the Apostle are in their general sense applicable to all times and places," we think he has altogether failed in establishing that the specific danger which he here foretells is manifestly one that was to occur not long after. What is his argument to establish this? The whole of it is this—"For he says, after my departure ravening wolves shall enter in," "and of your own selves shall arise men speaking perverse things." Now, observe, St. Paul does not say, "immediately or shortly after my departure," nor allude to any particular time or event, but uses words which, with perfect propriety, might be used to designate either an event or a series of events which were not to happen until after his death—events quite as likely to happen fifty years after his death as a few years after it. What is it but this—"While I remained with you, to teach and warn you day and night with tears, you had me, of course, to refer to on all occasions of difficulty, but after I am gone, as you can no longer refer to me, keep an anxious watch against false teachers, who will try to mislead you"—a practical exhortation, which would surely be as applicable, if not more applicable, to their successors than to themselves. Were the exhortations of uninspired philosophers, such as Socrates or Aristotle, ever considered as addressed to their immediate disciples alone, and not understood as equally applicable to all their followers? And how much more the words of an inspired Apostle, who had the acknowledged power of working miracles in confirmation of everything he taught? And which of his hearers could have limited the caution of St. Paul as applying exclusively to the natural lives of those to whom he spoke, merely because, in addressing such a class as the ordained pastors of the Church, he used the phrase "of your own selves," instead of the synonymous one "of your own body"? The fact that during the life of Timothy, who was then Bishop of Ephesus, Hymeneus and Alexander, Phigellus and Hermogenes "made shipwreck concerning the faith"—i.e., apostatized from Christianity—assuredly affords no additional proof that St. Paul exclusively confined his warning to those who actually heard him; and until some better proofs than those given by Dr. Murray shall be produced, we cannot consent to treat it as "a fact established" that though St. Paul might have "contemplated a general case (the general fortunes of the Church in after ages), he did not contemplate any except a particular case, and, therefore, shaped his admonitions accordingly." On the contrary, we must continue to hold that St. Paul selected this occasion for addressing truths of general importance to the whole Church of God, especially when we see that his companion, St. Luke, writing under Divine guidance, thought this address was a suitable one to form a part of what was to be delivered down, for the benefit of all after ages, in the Holy Scriptures, and be received as an authoritative part of the Gospel of the grace of God, which St. Paul "received of the Lord Jesus," and was commissioned "to testify," not to the Ephesians only, but to the whole Gentile world. If this be the fact, and his words be admitted to be applicable also to the Church in after times, when (to use Dr. Murray's own words), "under the pressure of persecution or from other causes, the knowledge of men might become imperfect, and doubts and difficulties might arise that would require the intervention of an infallible tribunal to settle, if such tribunal existed," the silence of St. Paul as to the existence of any such tribunal, is not only unexplained by Dr. Murray, but the Archbishop's palmary argument, as Dr. Murray calls it, is, we think, left quite untouched and unanswered. It appears, indeed, to us that Dr. Whately so shaped his objection, that no other reply was possible, except that which Dr. Murray has attempted to give, but which has led him unavoidably into an admission at variance with the doctrines of his Church—an admission which, if it means anything, amounts to this—that an infallible authority is unnecessary for the transmission of Divine truth, inasmuch as when Divine truth has been once

fully given to a church, infallibility is no longer requisite, even as a means for the prevention of disputes, or detection of heresy; the sole means of preserving the treasure of sound doctrine being, "watching and prayer, and pastoral supervision," which are obviously as open to the members of the Church of England which denies, as to those of the Church of Rome which asserts the existence of an infallible guide and judge of controversies. On the whole, however we may admire the ingenuity and boldness of Dr. Murray, and appreciate his temper and courtesy as a controversial writer, we think his attempt at replying to Archbishop Whately's essay has not only failed, but is one of the most distinct and explicit abandonments of the necessity for an infallible Church which we have yet met with in any Roman Catholic writer.

#### Correspondence.

##### TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—I am really much surprised you should assert, in page 78 of your July number, middle of second column, that I make the decrees of General Councils the sole interpreter of Scriptures; that I mention this alone, (1) and, of course, that I believe in no other.

How can you reconcile such a proposition with the 7th paragraph of my letter, top of page 69, and 3rd column of June number, wherein I expressly affirm that the clergy are to be regarded as the judges appointed by God to expound the law, and their expositions to be considered binding? Ezekiel xlv. 24; Mal. ii. 7; Acts viii. 26, and subsequent verses; 2 Cor. iii. 6.

I certainly do say that the sense in which the CATHOLIC CHURCH has held, and does hold, the Holy Scriptures, can be best ascertained—in fact, is embodied—in the decrees of her General Councils, which were convened at different periods to condemn various heresies; and, in doing so, have necessarily given, and set forth in detail, the church's sense and interpretation of such portions of Scripture as from time to time were heretically relied upon, and advanced against Catholic doctrine.

That I deem perfectly satisfactory and consistent, in reply to the oft-repeated question of where the true sense of the Holy Scriptures is to be found, which the Roman Church professes to enjoy, but which, it is alleged, she has never published.

Your commentary, in this particular, resembles very much the wailing of a man under the discipline of a drummer. You are neither pleased with the interpretation of priests nor councils, and wish to be left all to yourself.

Will you give me leave to ask, by what authority you next proceed to excommunicate from the Protestant fold Socinians and some others (?) whom you do not look upon as Christians, though they call themselves Protestants? Have they not as clear a right to exercise their private judgment, and protest as you? How can you write that you know of no difference among any Protestant bodies about articles of faith, when there are essential differences between the United Church of England and Ireland, and what, by Act of Parliament, is styled the Protestant Presbyterian Church of Scotland? You state that your church law of divorce does not allow the separated parties to marry; if so, why are such married by clergymen of the Church of England, not only as ministers, but likewise as principals?

You make a distinction between religious observances, &c., &c., and articles of faith, to which I readily accede, and am most happy to have elicited; I only pray you to extend the same indulgence to Roman Catholics, and not everlastingly be calling on them for Scripture proof of such and such religious practices and observances, which are matters of individual predilection, and not of general or Catholic belief.

You conclude by observing, that if the Church of Rome had not been guilty of serious errors, you would not have been justified in leaving her communion. Whether the Church of Rome has erred in its teaching is but a matter of opinion; whether it is the church founded by Christ and his Apostles, and, in despite of powers and principalities, enjoys a perpetuity, is a matter of fact. The living church, in direct descent, is the test and confutation of all false churches.

For a moment, and for the sake of argument—admitted it has become corrupt, what justification is that for your separation from her fold? I challenge you to produce a Scriptural authority for dissent. Dissent is nowhere recommended in the New Testament; quite the contrary. The Church of Galatia was corrupt; St. Paul, nevertheless, did not exhort its members to separate from, or come out of it, but to remedy its abuses. The Church of Corinth was corrupt; the Apostle acted in the same way with respect to it. The Jewish Church was corrupt, exceedingly corrupt in our Saviour's time, yet he, whom if we follow we walk in the fulness of light, so far from separating from it, attended on its ministrations, paid its charges, inculcated obedience to its ministers; in a word, exhibited the example of a scrupulous regard to its ecclesiastical authority. When the Corinthians had a mind to introduce something like

schism and dissent into Christianity, St. Paul thus rebukes them—"Is Christ divided?"—1 Cor. i. 13. Nor should Christ's fold be so; but one, under one shepherd. I remain, sir,

Your very obedient,  
M. V. AYLMER.

July 31, 1852.

We would be most unwilling to misrepresent Mr. Aylmer's opinions, and most anxious to correct any mistake, if we have made one. We are not yet sensible that we have done so; but if Mr. Aylmer can show us that we have, we will make the fullest amends.

It is true we did say "Mr. Aylmer makes the decrees of General Councils the interpreter of Scripture; he mentions this alone, and, of course, he believes in no other." Mr. Aylmer asks us did we not observe that he had said before, "the priests are to be regarded as the judges appointed by God to expound the law, and their expositions to be considered binding?" We did certainly observe this; but, then, we know that Roman Catholics differ very much about the sense to be put upon these words; some very ignorant men speak as if everything that any one priest may say, is to be received as gospel, infallibly true. Other Roman Catholics, who have more knowledge, treat this doctrine with as much contempt as Protestants do, and admit it to be clearly false; these say that when we speak of the expositions of priests as binding, it can mean only what all priests agree in teaching, and not what each individual priest may say. And when we come to ask how we are to know what teaching all priests do agree in, we find two different answers; one party tells us that we are to read what priests have written, to search all their books, to find out all their opinions, and then to form our judgment, of what they agree in. Now we confess that our experience makes this the most impossible task that ever was imposed upon mankind. Suppose that we even could find out, in this way, what all the priests in the world at the present day do agree in, it would not only cut out much which Mr. Aylmer would keep in, but we should not even then be at the end of the question; for what if we should find, as we certainly should in many cases, that the priests of a former age thought differently? Truth must be the same in all ages. Let us take an example to illustrate this method. Does the discourse in St. John's Gospel, chapter 6, apply to the Holy Sacrament or not? There is no question concerning the interpretation of Scripture, of greater practical importance in the controversies of this day. Will Mr. Aylmer show us how we are to ascertain the general sense of all the priests of the present day upon this? We ask him just to try and tell us how we can ascertain this. Will he try? And if he could, what if we should be able to show, that the greatest and most learned priests of his own church, in ages not long past, taught the very opposite?

It is the absolute impossibility of finding out the general agreement of all priests in this way, that has led the wisest and most learned men of his own church to say, that we are to look for the authoritative exposition of priests only in the decrees of General Councils.

There are three different senses in which the judgment of priests is held binding:—

1st. What any priest may say.

2nd. The general agreement of priests, gathered in some vague way, no one can tell exactly how.

3rd. The solemn judgment of priests laid down in General Councils, so that the world may have some chance of finding out exactly what it is.

Those who hold that the judgment of priests is binding, consider themselves at liberty to hold any of these three opinions. If we should, at any time, mistake the sense in which any individual holds the judgment of priests binding, some allowance ought to be made for us, seeing that Roman Catholics differ so much among themselves about the sense of these words.

We gave Mr. Aylmer credit for the last of these opinions, as being the least opposed to common sense, and that which is most commonly adopted by learned and wise men in his own church; and if we have erred, in supposing that this was the sense in which he used the words, we do not think this should be any ground of offence to him.

We think his own words led us naturally to think that this was his meaning. Here is what he said—"You have inquired where the true sense of the Holy Scriptures is to be found, which the Roman Church professes to enjoy, but which you assert she has never published. To which I reply, that the sense in which the Catholic Church has held, and does hold, the Holy Scriptures, can be best ascertained—in fact, is embodied—in the decrees of her General Councils." Now, if he had only said—"Can be best ascertained," we should have understood him to imply that there might be other binding expositions, which were not contained in the decrees of Councils; but when he adds that the church's sense of Scripture is "embodied" in those decrees, we understood him to say that the whole authoritative exposition which priests have to give, is all contained in the decrees of Councils. If we have mistaken his meaning, it was this led us astray.

If he will now say that there are other expositions of

priests, which are not contained in the decrees of General Councils, but which are yet to be considered binding, we beg that he will tell us 1st, what they are; 2nd, where they are to be found; 3rd, how we are to know them; 4th, where they have been published. We would beg of him, and of every one else who may read this paper, to try and produce some ONE INSTANCE of an exposition of priests, of any one passage of Scripture, which exposition is not depending on the decree of a Council, and yet is binding; and to tell us on what principles it is binding.

Can any one give us such an instance?

We suspect that when Mr. Aylmer considers this more carefully, he may be content to fall back on the sense we put on his words, and to grant that there really is no possible way of ascertaining the binding exposition of priests but by their formal decree in a Council.

This is certainly the most plausible sense to put on the binding authority of priestly expositions. Yet even this Mr. Aylmer may find too large to be maintained.

For instance, will he accept all the decrees of the General Councils of Constance and Basil? Are they all binding? Can he venture to answer this?

Or will he be bound by all the decrees of the four first General Councils? Can he venture to answer this—yes, or no?

Or will he be bound by all the decrees of the second Council of Nice? All these are difficult questions for him; but we must leave them for the present. If he will now tell us in what sense, and to what extent he considers the expositions of priests binding, and how we are to ascertain those which are binding, we will take care not to misrepresent his opinion.

Mr. Aylmer next asks—"By what authority you next proceed to excommunicate from the Protestant fold Socinians and some others whom you do not look upon as Christians, though they call themselves Protestants?"

We reply—1st. Socinians deny the essential doctrines of the Gospel, as they are plainly laid down in Holy Scripture.

2nd. They deny those doctrines as laid down in the Catholic creeds, which certainly contain the faith of the Catholic Church.

We, therefore, cannot acknowledge Socinians as our brethren in the faith of Christ, and in his Church.

Will Mr. Aylmer deny that these reasons are sufficient? If he will deny it, can he show any reason for rejecting Socinians that will be plainer, simpler, and more sufficient?

Mr. Aylmer says—"That there are essential differences in articles of faith between the Church of England and Ireland, and the Presbyterians in Scotland." If this were so, it would be no part of our business to defend those who differ from us in articles of faith. But we are not at all aware that it is so; and we must ask Mr. Aylmer to explain in what articles of faith they differ from us.

The prohibition against marrying a woman who is put away (Matthew v. 32), evidently applies to one who is put away contrary to Christ's command. No marriage with one so put away has ever been sanctioned, that we know of, by English law. Can Mr. Aylmer venture to say that no marriage with one put away contrary to Christ's command, has ever been sanctioned by the Roman Church?

Mr. Aylmer admits our distinction between articles of faith and religious observances, &c.; and says—"I only pray you to extend the same indulgence to Roman Catholics, and not everlastingly be calling on them for Scripture proof of such and such religious practices and observances," &c. We think Mr. Aylmer is under a mistake; it is true we call for Scripture proof of the creed of Pope Pius—that is, of the articles of faith of the Roman Catholic Church. With respect to religious practices and observances, which are not of general or Catholic belief, we only require that they shall not be contrary to Scripture. Let Mr. Aylmer look back through our journal from the beginning, and see if we have not limited our demands to this. He himself has called for Scripture proof of the calendar of the English Prayer-book! Why should he charge us with everlastingly doing what we have not done, and he has done?

Mr. Aylmer relies upon the mere fact of the succession of the Roman Church, as sufficient to condemn those who leave her, because her doctrine is corrupt. Does Mr. Aylmer not know, that the succession of the Greek Church from the Apostles is a fact quite as undeniable as the succession of the Roman Church? Does Mr. Aylmer think that the succession of the Greek Church is sufficient to prevent any one leaving her communion on account of corrupt doctrine? The succession of the Church of England and Ireland is as clear as either the Roman or the Greek.

Mr. Aylmer says—"You conclude by observing, that if the Church of Rome had not been guilty of serious errors, you would not have been justified in leaving her communion." We acknowledge that we used an incorrect expression. The Church of England and Ireland has not refused to hold communion with the Church of Rome; we have always professed our readiness, and our desire, to hold communion with her in all things lawful by the Word of God, the Catholic creeds, and the decrees

of the General Councils of the universal church. The Church of Rome has refused to hold communion with us, unless we will do things which God forbids, and profess things which he denies; and, on our declining to do these things, the Church of Rome has withdrawn her communion from us. We wish it could be otherwise; but the guilt of separation rests with her, not with us.

Mr. Aylmer maintains, that a church becoming corrupt is no justification for separation from her. He illustrates and proves it thus—"The Church of Galatia was corrupt; St. Paul, nevertheless, did not exhort its members to separate from, or come out of it, but to remedy its abuses." We submit that this is precisely what has been done in the Church of England and Ireland.

But does that instance of the Church of Galatia prove that separation from a Church can never be lawful? Was not this said to the Galatians—"Though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you, besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema."—Gal. i. 8, Douay Bible. The Church of Galatia was at that time preaching "another gospel."—Verse 6. Of course the Apostle's desire and command was to reform the Church of Galatia, by correcting its abuses and removing its corruptions; and happily this was done. But if the Church of Galatia had refused to be reformed, and had persisted in preaching another gospel, were not all faithful Christians in that church bound, by the Apostles command, to count that Church of Galatia anathema, or accursed?

We trust Mr. Aylmer will find nothing objectionable in the temper in which we have replied to him. It is our earnest desire to understand his arguments, and to give them the fairest consideration.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

2 MACCABEES xii. 43, 44, 45, 46.

SIR—Notwithstanding that you are justly esteemed one of the most erudite Celtic paleographers of the present day, yet I must object to your translation, from the original Greek, of the above verses from the 12th chapter of the 2nd Book of Maccabees.

As every Greek copy of the Book of Maccabees agrees with that valuable and ancient manuscript in the Vatican library, as well as with the Alexandrian manuscript now in the British Museum, to both of which you have referred, I am happy to find we can have no controversy about the original; but the "correct translation" with which you have favoured your readers, in this month's number of the LAYMAN, is not exactly in accordance with that generally received by Protestants, and totally at variance with the reading and interpretation of a scholar and divine whose works stand high among those of British theologians.

Within the last day or two I have had the satisfaction of finding my view and argument on 2nd Maccabees confirmed by no less an authority than Bishop JEREMY TAYLOR, who was not only an Irish prelate of great renown, but likewise one of the early Vice-chancellors of our University. This learned doctor, in his *Lib. of Proph. i. 1*, sec. 20, n. 11, p. 345, thus expresses himself:—

"We find, by the Maccabees, that the Jews did pray and make offerings for the dead, which appears by other testimonies, and by their form of prayer, still extant, which they used in the captivity. Now, it is very considerable, that since our Blessed Saviour did reprove all the evil doctrines and traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, and did argue concerning the dead and the resurrection, yet he spoke no word against this public practice, but left it as he found it, which He who came to declare to us all the will of his Father, would not have done if it had not been innocent, pious, and full of charity."

Now, on referring to my former writing, your readers will perceive that this is precisely what I advanced, and the force of which you endeavoured to avoid by a translation which I can in no way admit to be correct.

Judas Maccabeus, be it recollected, was not only the chief, but the most virtuous and zealous high priest of all the priests and doctors attached to the service of the Temple, and of the whole Jewish nation, and would certainly have neither introduced nor directed any such offering for the dead, if contrary to the Mosaic law. Judas Maccabeus it was who instituted and celebrated the festival of the restoration of all the sacrifices at the Temple for eight days; and the learned translator of Josephus's works (the late Rev. Wm. Whiston, A.M., Cambridge), is of opinion, with many others, that this is the festival commemorated in the gospel, John ii. 23, to which our Blessed Saviour, we are told, came up to Jerusalem on purpose to bear a part in the solemnization of it.

In conclusion, I re-assert, and upon scriptural authority (Ecclesiasticus vii. 37; 1 Cor. xv. 29), that prayers for the dead formed a constant part of the public worship of the Jews; and that the baptisms or legal purifications, which the Jews likewise used for the dead, demonstrate their belief that the dead receive spiritual aid from the devotion of the living.

WARNER CHRISTIAN SEARCH.

August 28, 1852.